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February 12, 1964

Dr. John Hotchin,  
Assistant Director  
State of New York  
Department of Health  
Albany 1, New York

Dear Dr. Hotchin:

It seems to me that I wrote to Dr. Hemenway 5 or 6 years ago to encourage just what you mention in your letter of November 14. I wish, however, that I could be as helpful in detail as enthusiastic in principle. I don't have to point out how difficult it is to establish really convincing results on the adequacy of sterile control, and I would put major emphasis on this.

I assume you are familiar with the General Mills strata-balloon work (of which I am sceptical), and the "cultures" from the Orgueuil stone (likewise).

Frankly, the odds seem so low I would be inclined to favor a morphological and microchemical study of high altitude particles before seriously trying their microbiology. And still contamination will be a major problem!

Good luck.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL: as

Hotchin, J.